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Medication Safety Initiative Reaches Elementary Students

CEDARVILLE, OHIO – Students from Cedarville University's School of Pharmacy are launching a new initiative to educate elementary school students and their parents about the dangers of misusing over-the-counter (OTC) medication.

The OTC Medicine Safety Campaign will launch with sessions for fourth and fifth graders at Cedarville Elementary School from April 26-27. The program is part of a larger collaborative effort between the American Pharmacists Association Academy of Student Pharmacists (APhA-ASP), McNeil Consumer Healthcare and Scholastic Corporation.

"At around the age of 11, children start to self-medicate with OTC medications," said Vineeta Rao, a first-year professional pharmacy student from Indianapolis, Indiana. "We want to prevent children from abusing medications by educating them on how to properly adhere to a medication's guidelines and instructions."

According to the OTC Medicine Safety Campaign, the improper use of over-the-counter medications is responsible for 10,000 emergency room visits each year for children under the age of 18. In addition, poison control centers around the nation manage more than 125,000 cases annually involving medication errors for children ages 6-19.

The OTC Medicine Safety sessions at Cedarville Elementary School will include information about how to properly read and adhere to medication instructions, as well as proper storage, measurement and disposal guidelines.

In addition to Rao, the campaign is being spearheaded by first-year professional students Abigail Moon (Carlisle, Ohio) and Nicholas Rudy (Lancaster, Pennsylvania), along with second-year professional student Danielle Baker (New Castle, Indiana) and third-year professional student Rebecca Dix (Lancaster, Pennsylvania).

Rao and Rudy will serve as the main presenters for the program, providing a 45-minute interactive presentation that features videos, drug fact posters, digital storybooks and family guides. All materials for the program are provided free of charge by Scholastic, one of the world's largest publishers of educational materials.

Cedarville's pharmacy students are hoping to expand the campaign next year by presenting at other schools in the area and will use their experience at Cedarville Elementary to evaluate the program's effectiveness and make any needed changes before branching out.

"We want to use this campaign as an opportunity to learn how to effectively communicate medication safety to this young of an age group, which is a skill that can be used in our future careers," said Dix.

Located in southwest Ohio, Cedarville University is an accredited, Christ-centered, Baptist institution with an enrollment of 3,711 undergraduate, graduate, and online students in more than 100 areas of study. Founded in 1887, Cedarville is recognized nationally for its authentic Christian community, rigorous academic programs, strong graduation and retention rates, accredited professional and health science offerings, and leading student satisfaction ratings. For more information about the University, visit www.cedarville.edu.